

# The Firefighter Selection Process

To qualify for the position of firefighter, candidates must complete the following steps in the testing/selection process:

## Making the Decision

When considering a career in the Fire Service, many people immediately focus on the risks involved. However, a career in the Fire Service is both challenging and rewarding. The City of Columbus, Division of Fire has an extensive three-year Journeymen Firefighter program that prepares men and women for the challenges an emergency situation involves. The Division of Fire has a strong focus on the initial training as well as continuing education of fire personnel, which gives the City of Columbus one of the best Fire Divisions in the Country. This training, the teamwork, and trust in your fellow firefighters are all the tools necessary for this level of responsibility. Focus should be placed on protecting the health and safety of others, which provides personal rewards that are immeasurable. In addition, the flexible schedules allows for quality time with friends and family, and other interests. Prior fire experience is NOT required, so if you are ready for a rewarding career that will provide life-long skills and continue to be a challenge, please consider this career! For questions in this step, please call Fire Recruiting at (614) 645-6387.

## YES!! I want to be a Firefighter!!

Before applications are accepted, you may complete a Job Class Interest Sheet. This will ensure you receive information by mail when applications are accepted. Application packets will be mailed to those who have expressed interest with Civil Service, OR with the Division of Fire. [Click here](#) to complete the Job Interest form. Be sure to include "3090 Firefighter", and any other positions you may be interested in with the City of Columbus. We generally accept applications for a limited number of weeks, so be sure you are on the mailing list so that you will be informed of this time period! If you have any questions please call Sheri LaVette, the Civil Service Commission Employment Consultant, at (614) 645-7708, or email [sherilavette@columbus.gov](mailto:sherilavette@columbus.gov)

## Application

An application and Abbreviated Background Questionnaire (ABQ) must be submitted with the Columbus Civil Service Commission. To receive an application packet by mail, please see previous step. The application requirements are: 1. at least 17½ years of age at the time of application and 18 years old in order to be appointed; 2. valid driver's license at time of application and valid Ohio driver's license at time of appointment; 3. high school diploma or GED at time of appointment; 4. U. S. citizen.

## Civil Service Exam

If the application and ABQ are approved, the Civil Service Commission will notify the applicant of the time and place to report for the examination. Prior to the test, preparation materials will be provided and information sessions will be offered. Candidates are strongly advised to utilize these materials and attend these sessions. The examination will include a multiple-choice test, a physical capabilities test, and an oral exam. Candidates who pass all three phases of the exam will be placed on an eligible list based on their final score.

## Background Investigation

Candidates who score well enough on the Civil Service examination(s) to begin the background process will be mailed a personal history questionnaire (PHQ). At a later date, candidates will be required to attend a pre-interview with a background investigator at Fire Headquarters. Pictures, fingerprints, and waivers will be completed to assist in an extensive background investigation. Candidates' PHQs will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the [background removal standards](#) prior to scheduling of the polygraph examination.

**Residency Requirement:** You must reside in Franklin County or an adjoining county upon appointment to the Fire Academy.

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Candidates will then complete a pre-polygraph questionnaire and the polygraph examination will be conducted to verify the accuracy and completeness of all the information provided.

The Civil Service Commission will review the polygraph summary and PHQ to ensure there are no violations of the background removal standards for employment with the Division of Fire.

The background investigative summary is sent to the Oral Review Board, which consists of firefighters. Candidates are required to be interviewed by this board and questions will be asked regarding the background investigation.

### Safety Director Review

Oral Review Board recommendations and background investigations will be reviewed by the chain of command and a summary will be forwarded to the Director of Public Safety. The Director will make the final decision regarding conditional offers of employment.

### Medical

After being given a conditional offer of employment, a rigorous medical examination will be administered, including vision and cardiovascular stress tests. These tests must be passed before you can be appointed to the position of Firefighter. The vision requirements state that vision must be **correctable to 20/30** and no more than **20/100 binocular** uncorrected in each eye.

### Appointment

Candidates will be notified by letter of an appointment date to the Fire Academy.

All new fire recruits may be required to obtain and maintain an Emergency Medical Technician-Paramedic certification during their term of

employment as deemed necessary by the Fire Chief.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### *How many people will be hired?*

The number of individuals hired will depend upon several factors, such as the budget, the number of retirements, and the overall need of the Division of Fire. Since these factors vary annually, it is difficult to identify the number that will be hired in any given year.

#### *When will the next class start?*

This question is similar to the previous one, in that it is determined by the needs of the Division.

#### *What are my chances of becoming a Firefighter?*

Many individuals express interest in employment with the City of Columbus, Division of Fire. Since the selection process is competitive, with a limited number of individuals that will be successful, those numbers can be overwhelming. However, the number of individuals who are truly committed to becoming a Firefighter drops dramatically. There are a great number of individuals who do not commit themselves to what is required for this process. We realize it is a process requiring a great time commitment, however it is an extremely important position with great responsibility that must include a rigorous selection process. When you consider this position, you should also consider the many rewards that come with this position. We encourage you to commit yourself to this process - you will NOT regret it!

#### *Important TIP!!*

Keep your address current with us!!! You will miss important information unless your address is kept current with the Civil Service Commission and the Division of Fire. This information needs to be done in writing, on-line with a [change address form](#), by mail to 50 West Gay Street, Room 600, Columbus, Ohio 43215, or by fax at (614) 645-8334.

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